



# Hearing Notice

## Proposed Amendments to the Dam Safety Rule

### Chapter 173-175 WAC

from Ecology's Water Resources Program

#### **Dam Safety Rule Public Hearings**

All hearings begin at  
7:00 p.m.

#### **May 26, 2004**

Department of Ecology  
Eastern Regional Office  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Large  
Conference Room  
N. 4601 Monroe  
Spokane, WA 99205

#### **May 27, 2004**

Wenatchee Senior  
Activity Center  
Card Room  
1312 Maple Street  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

#### **June 1, 2004**

Department of Ecology  
Auditorium  
300 Desmond Drive  
Lacey, WA 98504

#### **June 3, 2004**

Mt. Vernon Police &  
Court Campus  
Multipurpose Room  
1805 Continental Place  
Mt. Vernon, WA 98273

Copies of the proposed  
rule language and  
SBEIS are available to  
download and print at:  
[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/  
programs/wr/dams/dsrul  
e.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/dams/dsrule.html)

**The Department of Ecology (Ecology) will hold four public hearings to receive comments on the proposed amendments to the Dam Safety Rule, Chapter 173-175 WAC. Written comments may be submitted until 5:00 p.m., June 11, 2004.**

#### **Background**

There are currently more than 900 non-federal, non-hydropower dams in Washington that store at least 10 acre-feet of water or watery materials, such as mine tailings, sewage and manure waste. A single acre-foot of water contains 325,851 gallons-enough to cover a square acre of land 12 inches deep.

Of the 900 dams, 320 pose a significant or higher threat to downstream residents if the structures failed because of an earthquake, storm or other catastrophe. The risk is based on the number of people and structures that reside downstream from the dam.

Ecology engineers conduct periodic inspections to verify dams are properly designed, constructed, operated and maintained.

#### **Inspection fees**

In 1917, lawmakers levied annual dam-safety inspection fees. The fees were collected until the 1930s when, for reasons unknown, the assessments stopped. The 2003 legislature directed Ecology to reinstate the periodic inspection fees.

The proposed yearly inspection fee for the state's 130 high-hazard dams, or those located upstream from three or more residences, will be \$800 a year and guarantee an inspection every five years. The proposed inspection fees for the 190 significant-hazard dams, located upstream from one or two homes, will be \$250 a year and ensure an inspection every 10 years.

#### **Permit fees for new construction or modifications of existing dams**

Under the same rule, Ecology is proposing to raise the fees the agency charges dam owners to review construction plans for building new dams or making modifications to existing facilities and inspecting the work. The fees also will pay for technical assistance to help all dam owners comply with state regulations. The proposed increases are designed to recover the actual cost of plan review and conducting inspections. Under the new fee schedule, the current minimum \$500 fee will increase to \$1,400, while the existing maximum fee of \$20,000 will increase to \$56,000.

The fees will not affect existing dams, unless the owner decides to make structural modifications. However, if Ecology initiates action to have an existing dam repaired due to safety deficiencies, the department will charge owners a flat \$1,400 fee.

## Hearings information

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Ecology will hold public hearings in Lacey, Mount Vernon, Spokane and Wenatchee to receive comments on the proposed amendments to the state dam safety rule. The proposed amendments will include fee increases for plan reviews and construction inspections, and resume the collection of fees for Ecology's periodic inspection of existing dams. Some updating of language and minor revisions also will take place.

## Hearings schedule

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Written comments may be submitted to David Cummings, Water Resources Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Washington 98504-7600, or faxed to (360) 407-7162 until 5:00 p.m., June 11, 2004.

### **Wednesday, May 26, 2004**

7:00 p.m.  
Department of Ecology  
Eastern Regional Office  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Large Conference Room  
N. 4601 Monroe  
Spokane, WA 99205

### **Thursday, May 27, 2004**

7:00 p.m.  
Wenatchee Senior Activity Center  
Card Room  
1312 Maple Street  
Wenatchee, WA 98801

### **Tuesday, June 1, 2004**

7:00 p.m.  
Department of Ecology  
Auditorium  
300 Desmond Drive  
Lacey, WA 98504

### **Thursday, June 3, 2004**

7:00 p.m.  
Mt. Vernon Police & Court Campus  
Multipurpose Room  
1805 Continental Place  
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

## For more information

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Copies of the proposed rule language and Small Business Economic Impact Statement are available to download and print at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/dams/dsrule.html>

If you would like additional information on the public hearings, please call Judy Beitel at (360) 407-6878. If you have questions on the proposed rule amendments, please call Doug Johnson at (360) 407-6623.

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*If you require this publication in an alternate format, please contact Judy Beitel, Water Resources Program, at (360) 407-6878 or TTY (for the speech or hearing impaired) at 711 or 800-833-6388.*